



## The Renowned Route of Heritage: from Bangkok to Hua Hin

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### Abstract

This study is the documentary research. The main objective of this research is to address that the route to Hua Hin is a renowned route of heritage depicting an abstract of value from the past that cannot be obliterated with tangible and intangible senses. From the documentary research and the interviews from every sample, detailed descriptions of revered places, temples, and parks have been presented in this study. Thus, it goes without saying that the route has been considered as spaces of varieties forming great memorable experiences--both tangible and intangible experiences--for tourists from the tourist destinations along this route. The tangible senses are palaces, temples, and the natural beauty of beaches and mountains while intangible senses are sacred spaces of worship and respect and the local way of life. Things were deemed a cost when the image of tangible subjects could be sold as souvenirs while the power of the intangible past could not be sold but respected because the cost and value are two different things. This route to Hua Hin has been depicting its heritage and varieties of get-away tourist destinations and bearing on the tradition for years. The route, therefore, is portraying the pride of Thai heritage.

**Keywords:** *heritage, sacred spaces, tangible, intangible, tourism destination*

### 1. Introduction

The route to Hua-Hin begins from the West of Bangkok on Rama II Road heading south along Phet Kasem Road passing Amphawa, Samut Songkhram Province leading to Phetchaburi Province before reaching Hua Hin in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province with a total of 200 kilometers. A tourist who seeks a great memory from a destination will find that these beach towns along the route may offer varieties of different purposes suiting varieties of tourists. The detailed descriptions and information from the documents and the interviews have shown that these remarkable destinations along the route can trigger the interests of visitors and tourists to travel along the very same intriguing, unique route. The final destination or Hua Hin is a dominant destination for locals and tourists to experience the identities of different Thai reigns through tangible places. At the same time, the locals and tourists can feel the intangible senses of the Thais who have visited the destinations, starting with tangible places of King Rama II at the beginning of the route to the end of the route that has the tangible and intangible memory of King Rama IX and the Rajabhakti Park of the Thai Kings which can be considered as Thai heritage.

### 2. Objective:

The objective of this research is to address that the route to Hua Hin is a renowned route of heritage depicting an abstract of value from the past that cannot be obliterated with tangible and intangible senses.

### 3. Materials and Methods

This study is documentary research from various sources including in-depth interviews, informal conversations at various times and places of stakeholders by employing the qualitative research technique of snowball as well as visits to several tangible places. The observations and group interviews of those tourists for intangible senses were performed at several palaces as well as at the temples. The data were



collected from January 2018 to January 2019. Then, the data were classified and organized as suggested by Schmuck (2006) and data triangulation (Patton, 2001).

The analysis of this methodology can be herein: Combining what one has read about the personality of His Royal Highness on this route to Hua Hin. It is apparent that Hua Hin has been a destination choice of people from Bangkok and visitors as well as tourists for more than 75-100 years, proving that the route to Hua Hin is the renowned route of heritage.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The route of heritage begins along the Rama II Road that runs through Amphawa City in Samut Songkhram Province where the palace of King Rama II located in the King Phra Buddha Loetla Nabhalai Palace Park that sits on the East of Mae Klong River or a few kilometers off the Pak Tho Highway. Next, in the center town of Phetchaburi, there sits Khao Wang, built on the hill as the palace of King Rama IV. Not too far from the West of Phet Kasem Road, there stands Wang Ban Poun Palace which was built by King Rama V (Duke, 1982). The route continues on the old road of Phet Kasem passing the entry intersection of Cha-Am District toward the west direction on Neranchara Road. At the intersection road along the beach of Cha-Am, there stands a statue of H.R.H. Krom Phra Narathip Prapanpong (2404-2474) or Kromphranara, son of King Rama IV at the trisection facing the beach as shown in Figure 1. His Royal Highness Kromphranara was the greatest influential of Thai plays or so-called Lakhon, the Thai musical plays and dances such as Lilit Phra Rueng, Ramayana, and an interpreted soap opera of Madama Butterfly called in Thai, Sao Krua Fah. His Royal Highness had written plays every day of his life for over one thousand manuscripts.



**Figure 1** Kromphranara's Kiosk, photo by the researcher (15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2018)

Following on the same Phet Kasem Road around 4-5 kilometers away, there stands a grand monument palace of King Rama VI, or Phra Ratchaniwet Mrigadayavan, built beautifully in the vintage fashion along the shoreline of about 390 meters. Furthermore, a few more kilometers in Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, there sits Klai Kangwon Palace built in the period of King Rama VII on the land of about 100 acres. At last, up in the Hin Lek Fai Hill in the mid of Hua Hin, there is an old palace on a small Knoll of about 18 acres looking westward to the sea, which now becomes a private home of the Snidvongs family. This private home or Chomdong Villa was also built by King Prajadhipok for Her Majesty Queen Rambai Barni, in the same contemporary fashion as the Klai Kangwon Palace.

This discussion reveals qualitative research that renders the intangible discourses of respect and faith in the monarchs and the tangible renowned route of heritage with palaces, temples, and monuments. To reach the objective, the researcher did research studies from several sources and took careful observations and organized interviews for community interactions and realized how local communities did



participate in actions throughout the past few years. These sets of dimensions became stepping stones leading to revealing the people's participation and actions in craft production and also to their concern on environmental issues.

From Bangkok to Samut Songkhram at about 56 kilometers before crossing Mae Klong River, a tourist can drive towards north through Amphawa local community. About 5-6 kilometers on the right-hand side, there is the Phra Buddha Loetla Nabhalai Park or King Rama II Memorial Park (reigned 1809-1824). Buddha Loetla Nabhalai's Palace Park takes up about 20 acres. The traditional complexes of Thai houses which were built in the early Rattanakosin style were kept nicely with a beautiful landscape of Thai plant materials, a lovely fragrant Thai garden. Besides, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 was the memorial day marked the birthday of His Majesty King Rama II, celebrating with Thai dances and music.

Continuing on Pak Tho highway to Phetchaburi southward on Phet Kasem Highway for another 40 kilometers, a tourist can see a hill on the left with King Mongkut's Palace or Khao Wang consisting of many unit structures. Phra Nakhon Khiri Historical Park or Khao Wang is 95 meters high erected in 1859 in the European-Sino-Siamese hybrid style. A grand Chedi (Pagoda) on top of the hill at 100 meters away on the South is a replication of Chedi that resembles the original Chedi situated in the Rattanakosin Island, Bangkok. The Buddhist Sect, called Dhammayuttika, was anointed by His Majesty King Mongkut (reigned 1851-1868) or King Rama IV. His Majesty had been in the monkhood for 27 years before ascending to the throne. The replicas of the temple and bell-shaped pagoda reminded of Wat Phra Kaeo in the Rattanakosin Island. Today, Phra Nakhon Khiri has been restored and preserved as a National Museum and Historical Park as a Hilltop Palace (Thatsanaleelaporn, 2006). Less than 4 kilometers down the hill, there stands King Rama V's Palace, Wang Ban Poun (meaning the house with the gun or Gunner Palace), also called Phra Ram Ratchaniwet Royal Palace.

King Chulalongkorn (reigned 1868-1910) or King Rama V brought in the concept of civilization. This concept, according to Williams (1983), carries a sense of enlightenment and modernity, and an achieved state often identified with received glories of the past. His Majesty was known as Diplomatic Leadership and Modern Monarch with an excellent taste (Am-ngerttra, 2006). The palace was first erected in 1910 and completed in 1916 under King Vajiravudh or King Rama VI.

Phra Ram Ratchaniwet Royal Palace by King Rama V was a product from His Majesty's second visit to Germany in 1907 after the first visit in 1897 when His Majesty's great relationship and affiliation with Kaiser Wilhelm II grew with the Emperor's honor. His Majesty's good taste in architecture gave the idea of Jugendstil the early twentieth-century architectural style known as Art Nouveau which was derived from the progressive magazine called 'Jugend' published in Munchen in 1896. At that time, William Morris in cooperation with other artists created the arts and crafts movement as a reaction to the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century artistic styles, from the new avant-garde art movement started in 1861 (Greene, 1999). His Majesty commissioned the architect, Karl Dohring, to design the Gunner Palace. When a tourist traveled further southward until approaching Cha Am intersection on the left, he has to turn to Cha Am beach on Neranchara Road. A small kiosk monument of Kromphranara, as shown in Figure1, stands there.

King Vajiravudh, or King Rama VI (reigned 1910-1925), was known for his romantic, artistic, fanciful, and dreamy nature, being a gifted author but undiplomatic. His Majesty encountered this route in Haad Chao Samran at the shoreline of Phetchaburi. Haad Chao Samran, which means the Lord of Happiness (Greene, 1999), is about 15 kilometers from the town of Phetchaburi. His Majesty followed the doctor's order to live in the fresh air at the seaside for the retreat of rheumatism with the belief that privacy, isolation, and tranquility would relieve His Majesty's symptoms. Thus, the retreat bungalow was completed in 1916. Many visits were made but with the disruption of local insects in this fishing community. However, a short distance southward with amenities of fresh water and convenience of train station nearby enabled to engender His Majesty decision to build the new palace. Traveling further southward to kilometer 202, a tourist can notice the Mrigadayavan Palace standing on the left. The King decided to build his new



seaside palace in 1923 by using construction materials from the dismantled buildings of the former villa. He named his new beach-front palace Mrigadayavan, literally meaning park of hog deer, so as to maintain the original meaning of the site while adopting the auspicious name of the park where the Lord Buddha gave his first sermon (Am-ngertra, 2006). The palace with a long walking balcony in the vintage fashion from His Majesty's exposure in England became a dreamlike pathway for His Majesty's shows, privacy, and lovely disciples. An elevated palace with long walks to the sea was visited by His Majesty only twice.

King Prajadhipok or King Rama VII (reigned 1925-1935) built a seaside palace in 1926 called Klai Kangwon, meaning nonchalance. It is the precious first palace in Hua Hin which, eventually, became King Rama IX's most visited destination.

Hua Hin is supposed to be sustainable in its own right. It was born after many royalty destinations along Phet Kasem Road. A white sandy beach and a seaside of about 10 kilometers with Khao Takiab on the far south-end direction and mountaineer backdrop with semi-flat slope runs to the Gulf of Thailand as shown in Figure 2. The prolific developments are pursuing to the north, which is Cha Am, and about 10 kilometers on the west is a nice view of mountain communities of Pa La U. In the southward, there are Khao Tao and Pranburi with less development and full of tranquility but today starting to follow the leader, Hua Hin.



**Figure 2** View of Khoa Takieb

Along the route to Hua Hin, King Mongkut or Rama IV used culture and arts as means to serve the nation in his determination to respond to the Western image of a modern state and civilized nation (Am-ngertra, 2006). Besides, Am-ngertra (2006) clearly stated that it was important for King Rama IV and King Rama V, in particular, to show the Western royalty that they too could inhabit grand palace with elaborated furnishing and were not the rulers of a backward country who could be easily overthrown. While the Thai-style buildings personified the divinity of the king to his subjects, the European-style buildings symbolized the equality of Thailand among other nations of the world (Lefebvre, 1991).

Today, Hua Hin is a destination for activities of sports, for instance, the world-class tennis matches, WTA, have recently finished on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, between Yastremska and Tomljanovic in *Toyota Thailand Open* and other activities such as music—jazz festival in April—arts show on Hin Lek Fai Hill-side which was also in these hot summer months. After July, a renowned durian season of Pa La U, an absolutely sweet and fragrant flavor, is inevitable for its lovers.

Hua Hin, for the tourists who are familiar with this community, understands the nature of its visitors and tourists of about 75-80 percent year-round. They visit Hua Hin for various purposes. The highlight of Hua Hin is during the weekend. At the entry of Khao Takiab, to name a few starting activities, Wat Nong Kae is the center of all Thai traditions, and not very far from this sacred Buddhist temple about 200 meters, the Cicada Night Market sits in front of an international-well-known hotel, the Grand Hyatt Regent. In this vicinity, everything is close to the beach at about approximately 200 meters. Moreover, the Tamarind Flee Market is also nearby.



The heritage route for the memory of Hua Hin is on Phet Kasem Road. Here, when looking at the destination with ideas of planning by examining what potential customers want, the supply will be adjusted to meet that desire (Howie, 2003). Road Number 23 can take everyone down to the beach and onto residences, condominiums, and hotels for an upper living.

Globally, tourism has become a major economic activity. During 1975-2000, international tourism trembled and will continue to grow more than double in the next fifteen to twenty years (around 2020) (Fusco and Nijkamp, 2009). This message will enhance tourism competitiveness as remarkable players of today Hua Hin on a new platform with stronger cultural heritage benefit.

Contemporary tourists are becoming more individualistic, seeking to satisfy their own special interests and leading to the development of special kinds of tourism such as ecotourism, adventure tourism, health and spa tourism, business travel and tourism, and cultural tourism. Mass tourism is rapidly shifting to independent tourism and special types of tourism for niche markets. Empirical study evidence has shown that capitalist development does not absorb the traditional economy but that both simply exist side-by-side in a dual system (Hall and Richards, 2000). Numerous opportunities for informal employment are emerging within the industry and should be considered when examining the economic impact of tourism (Hall and Richards, 2000). It is true in every developing country, in every tourism venue in Bangkok, Chiang Mai or Hua Hin. The researcher views that at Hua Hin, horse-back riding on the beach business is operated on day-to-day income as a family business. New venture cycle of local activities is awaiting in this destination someday soon, either in sports, health, food or wellness. Hua Hin with the festival of Art of Resort Living has promoted organic food growing in Hua Hin (BigChilli, 2008) while real estate promotion of housing and condominiums are growing wild in Hua Hin.

Everyone in the business does accept the necessity of innovation (Moran, 2010) and so marketing is inevitable. The business objective in communities resulted from these combinations—word of mouth (40%), customer loyalty (35%), bringing outside ideas into an organization (30%), improving customer support quality (25%), and finally increasing sales 22% (Moran, 2010). The researcher saw several small businesses hanging on a thin line, a bakery, a restaurant, and bars. Hua Hin in the eyes of international views is for wellness. Lastly, Hua Hin is where the Royal Highness manifestations depict very clearly especially at the ‘Rajabhakti Park,’ a few kilometers on the south near Khao Tao and can be considered as the end of the route of heritage—from Bangkok to Hua Hin as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** ‘Rajabhakti Park’, the Ending of Heritage Route taken by the researcher (Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019)

## 5. Conclusion

The renowned route of Heritage to Hua Hin or for some people after realizing the heritage as discussed above may call the route of Royalties. This particular route has led tourists from Bangkok to Hua Hin for more than 75 to 100 years. Hua Hin has been well known for the Thai way of life and its heritage





around the area and above all, good local seafood. The best practice is from word of mouth which brings tourists from all walks of life to Hua Hin. The administrative officers of Hua Hin have handled many issues for the better Hua Hin.

It is worth to mention that heritage becomes a proud subject for everyone from youngsters to adults. Learning about history and heritage may be best by a storyteller but learning the Thai heritage and doing some research will give entertaining aspects to listeners or readers as well. To learn to respect and to be proud of the Thai heritage is the absolute objective.

This route of heritage to Hua Hin is valuable and priceless to the Thais in terms of tangibility depicting palaces, temples, and monuments and intangibility in terms of worship and respect embedded in the Thais' awareness and disciplines. It is fully hoped that the younger generation does continue to value this route as a destination of Thai heritage as well as the way a tourist enjoys taking this route to a very special getaway destination for many years to come.

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